

Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
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FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 1473

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 PRETORIA 3543

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FROM LOW

E.O. 11652: GDS-2
TAGS: PINT, PDEV, RH
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: SMITH DEFINES PROPOSAL FOR MEETING

1. SUMMARY: SMITH EXPRESSED HIS DISAPPOINTMENT WITH THE PROGRESS OF THE CEASE FIRE AND HIS DISPLEASURE WITH THE PERFORMANCE OF HIS AFRICAN COLLEAGUES IN THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT. HE INDICATED A POSSIBLE WILLINGNESS TO TRY SOMETHING ELSE OR EXTEND THE PERIOD OF THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENT BY POSTPONING THE ELECTION. HE AGREED ON THE DESIRABILITY OF AN ALL PARTIES MEETING AND SAID THAT HE THOUGHT HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES WOULD BE PREPARED TO ATTEND A SECRET MEETING OF PRINCIPALS. HE SUGGESTED THAT HIS GROUP BE ON ONE SIDE OF THE TABLE AND THE PATRIOTIC FRONT, US AND UK ON THE OTHER. TO ATTEND A PUBLIC CONFERENCE HE WOULD NEED ASSURANCES FROM THE US AND UK THAT IF IT FAILED THEY WOULD SUPPORT THE MARCH 3 AGREEMENT. END SUMMARY

2. GRAHAM AND I HAD BUSINESSLIKE MEETING WITH IAN SMITH AT WHICH ONLY JACK GAYLARD WAS ALSO PRESENT. HAVING TOLD SMITH THAT WE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT AN ELECTION COULD BE HELD WHICH WOULD CONVINCE THE WORLD OF THE SUPPORT OF THE PEOPLE OF THE COUNTRY WE IMMEDIATELY
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GOT DOWN TO DISCUSSION OF A PROPOSED ALL PARTIES MEETING. SMITH REPEATED THE ARGUMENT THAT THE INTERNAL NATIONALISTS WERE RESISTING GOING TO A CONFERENCE BECAUSE THEY FEARED THEY WOULD DAMAGE THEIR POSITION WITH THE GUERRILLAS THEY WERE TRYING TO ENCOURAGE TO COME OVER TO THEIR SIDE. HE WENT ON HOWEVER TO DESCRIBE HIS DISAPPOINTMENT WITH PROGRESS OF THE CEASE FIRE. HE DESCRIBED THE BLUNT TERMS HE USED TO TELL THE

INTERNAL NATIONALISTS THAT THEY WERE NOT LIVING UP TO THEIR PROMISES. THEY WOULD HAVE TO GET ON WITH THE CEASE FIRE OR HE WOULD TRY SOMETHING ELSE. SMITH SAID HE TOLD THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS THEY WERE SPENDING TOO MUCH TIME ON POLITICS AND NOT ENOUGH ON THE MAIN TASK AT HAND, THE CEASE FIRE. THEN HE REPORTED WHAT HE CALLED ONLY A "STRAW IN THE WIND" BUT NEVERTHELESS A SIGNIFICANT COMMENT BY AN AFRICAN MINISTER THAT IF THE ELECTIONS COULD NOT BE HELD IN DECEMBER IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO PROLONG THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENT FOR A PERIOD OF TIME UNTIL THE CEASE FIRE COULD BE COMPLETED. THE SECURITY FORCES WERE SUGGESTING THAT A PERIOD OF A YEAR OR TWO MIGHT BE NECESSARY TO COMPLETE THE CEASE FIRE. HE DISAGREED WITH OUR WARNING THAT IF HE STRUCK WITH THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT BUT POSTPONED THE ELECTIONS, WHAT SUPPORT HE NOW HAD INSIDE THE COUNTRY WOULD DISAPPEAR.

3. GRAHAM DESCRIBED PRESENT STATE OF THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS FROM OUR OWN AND THE PATRIOTIC FRONT'S POSITION. WE SAID WE THOUGHT THERE WAS ROOM FOR FURTHER COMPROMISES BUT THE PATRIOTIC FRONT WOULD ONLY MAKE THEM TO SMITH HIMSELF. SMITH SUGGESTED THAT WE GO BACK TO KISSINGER'S PROPOSALS OF SEPTEMBER 1976. WE SAID WE WOULD HAVE TO APPROACH A MEETING FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE AAP BUT DID NOT FEEL BOUND BY THAT SO LONG AS THE PARTIES THEMSELVES AGREED ON SOMETHING ELSE.

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4. SMITH READILY ACCEPTED THE NEED FOR AN ALL PARTIES MEETING BUT SAID HE DID NOT THINK WE COULD GET VERY FAR UNLESS THE PRINCIPALS WERE INVOLVED. IF HE WAS TO GO TO A FORMAL CONFERENCE HE WOULD WANT TO BE CERTAIN OF ITS SUCCESS BEFORE HAND, AND BY THAT HE MEANT, IF IT FAILED HE WOULD WANT TO KNOW THAT THE UK AND US WOULD AGREE TO SUPPORT THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT. WE SAID IT WAS UNLIKELY WE COULD GIVE SUCH ASSURANCES THOUGH FAILURE OF A MEETING BECAUSE OF PATRIOTIC FRONT INTRANSIGENCIES WOULD AFFECT THE WAY THE WORLD VIEWED THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT. SMITH SAID IT WOULD NOT BE NECESSARY FOR SUCH ASSURANCES IF THE MEETING WAS SIMPLY AMONG THE SIX PRINCIPALS AND HELD SECRETLY. WE ASKED WHETHER HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES IN THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT WERE PREPARED TO ATTEND SUCH A CONFERENCE AND HE SAID HE WAS, AND THOUGHT THE OTHERS WOULD AGREE TO COME ALONG ALTHOUGH HE HAD NOT CONSULTED THEM. WE SAID WE THOUGHT SUCH A MEETING WOULD HAVE TO BE UNDER OUR AUSPICES AND WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSAL. WE WOULD PROBABLY HAVE TO BE IN THE ROOM AT LEAST FORMALLY. HE RAISED NO OBJECTIONS TO THIS. WE SAID WE THOUGHT THE PATRIOTIC FRONT WOULD HAVE DIFFICULTY WITH A 4-2 SPLIT IF AS HE SAID HIS GROUP WERE ON ONE SIDE OF THE TABLE WITH THE PATRIOTIC FRONT

ON THE OTHER. THEY WOULD WANT AN EQUAL NUMBER. GAYLARD SAID IT WOULD CREATE PROBLEMS IF THEY HAD THEIR DEPUTIES AND THE INTERNAL NATIONALISTS DID NOT. SMITH SUGGESTED THAT THE UK AND US COULD MAKE UP THE REST OF THE OTHER SIDE OF THE TABLE SINCE THE PATRIOTIC FRONT INSISTS THAT IT IS ONLY NEGOTIATING WITH THE BRITISH ANYWAY. HOWEVER HE DID NOT CLOSE THE DOOR ON A DIFFERENT KIND OF ARRANGEMENT.

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 PRETORIA 3543

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FROM LOW

5. FOLLOWING THE MEETING WITH SMITH, GRAHAM AND I TALKED BRIEFLY WITH GAYLARD ON DETAILS. HE ASKED ABOUT VENUE AND WE SUGGESTED TULI IN BOTSWANA AS AN APPARENTLY IDEAL PLACE. ON DATES HE SAID HE THOUGHT TWO OR THREE WEEKS WOULD BE NECESSARY TO ORGANIZE A MEETING AND SUGGESTED A TIME AFTER SMITH'S COMMITMENT ON JULY 13 AND PRIOR TO THE HIGHLANDS BI-ELECTION JULY 21. THE WEEKEND OF JULY 14-15 SEEMED TO SUIT THEM.

6. WE ARE SEEING MUZOREWA SATURDAY THE 24TH AND SITHOLE ON MONDAY THE 26TH AND WILL EXPLORE THE TWO POSSIBLE KINDS OF ALL PARTY MEETING WITH THEM. WE HAVE ANOTHER MEETING WITH GAYLARD THEN PLAN TO GO WEDNESDAY THE 28TH TO BLANTYRE AND LUSAKA. IF THE DEPARTMENT AND FCO AGREE WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO PURSUE SMITH'S PROPOSAL WE WOULD THEN TAKE IT UP WITH NKOMO AND PRESIDENT KAUNDA IN LUSAKA, RETURNING TO SALISBURY FRIDAY THE 30TH. IT MAY BE THAT FOR NKOMO THIS MEETING IS TOO EARLY BUT WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD PRESS ON. HE CAN ALWAYS SUGGEST ANOTHER DATE.

7. COMMENT: I WAS STRUCK BY SMITH'S LACK OF COMMITMENT TO THE MARCH 3RD AGREEMENT. THERE WOULD HAVE TO BE A SHARP IMPROVEMENT IN THE SECURITY SITUATION BEFORE I BELIEVE HE WOULD BE
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PREPARED TO GO AHEAD WITH THE MARCH 3 AGREEMENT. HE IS CLEARLY CONSIDERING ALTERNATIVES, INCLUDING A WHOLE NEW ARRANGEMENT. OUR PROPOSAL FOR AN ALL PARTIES MEETING MAY FIT IN WELL WITH THIS KIND OF SITUATION.

8. AS WE LEARNED IN APRIL SMITH HAS TOYED WITH THE IDEA OF POSTPONING THE ELECTION AND EXTENDING THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENT. I BELIEVE THAT IF HE DID SO HE COULD FACE A SERIOUS THREAT FROM HIS SECURITY FORCES INCLUDING ITS MOST SENIOR OFFICERS AND WOULD LOSE WHAT AFRICAN SUPPORT HE NOW HAS.

9. REQUEST DEPARTMENT'S THOUGHTS SOONEST ON THESE PROPOSALS AND THE PROGRESS OF OUR CONSULTATIONS TO DATE.
EDMONDSON

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